



Humboldt Bay NWR Complex

Planning Update #5—February 2009

Greetings from the Refuge Manager

This is the fifth planning update on the Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment (CCP/EA) process for the Humboldt Bay NWR Complex. Since the last planning update, the CCP planning team continued work on the Complex's Draft CCP/EA, which includes draft management alternatives for the Complex. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has made available for public review and comment the Draft CCP/EA for the Humboldt Bay NWR Complex.

The Draft CCP outlines the management direction and strategies for the Humboldt Bay NWR and the Castle Rock NWR for the next 15 years. Management activities will focus on the conservation of the Refuges' resources, particularly migratory birds and wildlife species that are federally listed as threatened or endangered, and their habitats; and providing opportunities for compatible public use including wildlife observation photography, environmental education, and interpretation, hunting and fishing. The EA presents three different management alternatives and evaluates their environmental impacts. These alternatives were developed with the help of comments, concerns, and suggestions we received from the public during the scoping period.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact our refuge planner, Sandy Osborn, or myself at the refuge with the contact information below. I hope you can join us at one of the public meetings listed on the other side of this Planning Update. Thanks for your time.

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Humboldt Bay NWR Complex
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Draft Conservation Plan Available!

The Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Complex Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment (CCP/EA) is available for viewing and downloading online at <http://www.fws.gov/humboldtбай/ccp.html>

Printed documents are also available for review in the Government Collection sections at the following libraries: Arcata Library, 500 7th St, Arcata; College of the Redwoods Library, 7351 Tompkins Hill Rd, Eureka; Del Norte County Library, 190 Price Mall, Crescent City; Fortuna Library, 753 14th St, Fortuna; Humboldt County Library, 1313 3rd St, Eureka; Humboldt State University Library, 1 Harpst St, Arcata; and Conservation Library, USFWS-NCTC, 698 Conservation Wy, Shepherdstown, WV.

An electronic copy of the Draft CCP/EA may be obtained by writing to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Attn: Sandy Osborn, Refuge Planner, 2800 Cottage Way, W-1832, Sacramento, CA 95825-1846 or E-mail fw8plancomments@fws.gov.

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|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Pre-planning |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Public Scoping & Identify Issues |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Develop Vision Statement & Goals |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Develop Alternative Objectives and Strategies |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Prepare Draft CCP/EA |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Public Review of Draft CCP/EA |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Prepare Final CCP |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Public Notice of Decision |

Paper copies of the Draft CCP/EA may be viewed at this address or at the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex, 1020 Ranch Rd, Loleta, CA 95551; during Visitor Center hours which are daily, 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

Please submit comments on the Draft CCP/EA by the close of the comment period on Monday, March 23, 2009.

For information about how to obtain the Draft CCP/EA, how to submit comments, and dates and locations of the upcoming public meetings, please see the other side of this Planning Update.

Sandy Osborn, Refuge Planner
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Pacific Southwest Region
Refuge Planning
2800 Cottage Way, W-1832
Sacramento, CA 95825

We Would Like to Hear From You

The Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment (CCP/EA) for the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex is available for public review and comment. There are several ways to submit comments on the Draft CCP/EA.

Comments may be mailed, faxed, or e-mailed to:

Sandy Osborn, Refuge Planner
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Pacific Southwest Region
2800 Cottage Way, W-1832
Sacramento, CA 95825

E-mail: fw8plancomments@fws.gov
Facsimile (FAX): (916) 414-6497
Please indicate "Humboldt Bay NWRC Draft CCP/EA" in the subject line.

Participate in Public Meetings:
To learn more about the Draft CCP/EA, please join us at one of the following public meetings:

Meeting Location:

Humboldt Bay National Wildlife
Refuge Complex
Richard J. Guadagno Headquarters
and Visitor Center
1020 Ranch Road
Loleta, California 95551-9633

Dates/Times:

Tuesday, March 3, 2009
5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
and

Thursday, March 5, 2009
11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Meeting Location:

Lighthouse Inn
681 Highway 101 South
Crescent City, California 95531

Date/Time:

Wednesday, March 4, 2009
3:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

If you would like to be added to or removed from the mailing list or are receiving multiple copies of these notices, please let us know via the e-mail or FAX contact information shown above.

Management Alternatives in the Draft CCP/EA

Management alternatives focus on accomplishing the purposes for which the individual refuges were established, fulfilling the mission of the Refuge System, as well as providing compatible wildlife dependent educational and recreational opportunities for the public.

Alternatives for Humboldt Bay NWR:

The Environmental Assessment analyzes three alternatives for managing Humboldt Bay NWR. The following briefly describes the highlights of each of the alternatives. Under **Alternative A** (the "No Action" alternative), the Service would continue current management of Humboldt Bay NWR at approximately the same level as in the recent past, including: maintenance of facilities and existing programs, Salmon Creek and other habitat restoration, control of invasives (especially *Spartina* or non-native cordgrass), habitat management for salmonids and Aleutian cackling geese, and public use initiatives. Under **Alternative B**, the Service would make a number of improvements to Humboldt Bay NWR management including substantial native habitat restoration, moderate enhancement of Aleutian cackling goose habitat, substantial restoration of Salmon Creek, substantial enhancements of other wetland and dune habitats, an increase in visitor services, a slight reduction in hunt opportunities, and proactive cultural resource management. **Alternative C** (the "preferred" alternative) would include many of the features of Alternative B plus more native

habitat restoration (especially salt marsh), more restoration of Salmon Creek, more enhancements of other wetland and dune habitats, and a slight increase in hunt opportunities compared to Alternative A. The Complex has also prepared a Visitor Services Plan, a Waterfowl Hunt Plan, and a Sport Fishing Plan for Humboldt Bay NWR concurrent with development of the CCP. These plans are included in the appendices to the Draft CCP/EA.

Alternatives for Castle Rock NWR:

The Environmental Assessment also analyzed three alternatives for managing Castle Rock NWR. Under **Alternative A** (the "No Action" Alternative), the Service would continue to manage Castle Rock NWR as it has in the recent past. Under **Alternative B**, the Service would make a number of changes to Castle Rock management including: restricting any monitoring and research to off-island; increasing educational outreach and interpretation; and increasing coordination with tribal entities. Under **Alternative C** (the "preferred" alternative), the Service would improve management of Castle Rock NWR by: expanding surveys for flora and fauna; improving research with remote controlled recording devices; increasing educational outreach and interpretation in collaboration with local entities; increasing coordination with tribal entities; and recommending Castle Rock NWR for wilderness designation and completing the associated legislative environmental impact statement.

An Update on the Complex's CCP Process

Since we distributed Planning Update # the CCP planning team has analyzed and evaluated the environmental consequences of the alternatives in the Draft CCP/EA. The next step in the CCP process is the public review of the Draft CCP/EA.

